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THIRTY-SIXTH

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

DANTE SOCIETY

(CAMBRIDGE, MASS.)

1917

ACCOMPANYING PAPER

HISTORY OF THE LETTERS OF DANTE FROM THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

By Paget Toynbee, 1855- —

BOSTON
GINN AND COMPANY
(FOR THE DANTE SOCIETY)
1919

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STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

(From May 16, 1916, to May 15, 1917)

Balance in the hands of the Treasurer, May 16, 1916	$904.58	
Members' fees till May 15, 1917	325.00	
Copyrights, etc.	35.03	
Interest	15.23	
		$1279.84
Paid Ginn and Company	$169.48	
Paid to the Treasurer of Harvard College:		
For Dante Collection	100.00	
Refunded from sales of Fay Concordance	18.00	
Printing, postage, etc.	12.48	
Balance on hand May 15, 1917	979.88	
		$1279.84

BY-LAWS

1. This Society shall be called the DANTE SOCIETY. Its object shall be the encouragement of the study of the Life and Works of Dante.

2. Any person desirous to become a member of this Society may do so by signifying his or her wish in writing to the Secretary, and by the payment of an annual fee of five dollars.

3. An Annual Meeting for the election of officers shall be held at Cambridge on the third Tuesday of May, of which due notice shall be given to the members by the Secretary.

4. Special meetings may be held at any time appointed by vote of the members at the Annual Meeting, or by call from the President and Secretary.

5. The officers shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary and Treasurer, and a Librarian, who, together with three members thereto chosen, shall form the Council of the Society. All these officers shall be chosen at the Annual Meeting, and their term of service shall be for one year, or until their successors are elected. Vacancies in the Council shall be filled for the remainder of the year by the Council.

6. The President, or, in his absence, the Vice President, or, in the absence of both, any member of the Council, shall preside at all meetings of the Society and of the Council.

7. The Secretary and Treasurer shall keep a record of the meetings of the Society and of the Council, shall collect and receive all dues, and keep accounts of the income and expenditure of the Society, shall give notice of meetings, and shall perform all other duties appropriate to his office.

8. The Council shall hold meetings at such times as it may appoint, shall determine on the use to be made of the income of the Society, shall endeavor to promote the special objects of the Society in such ways as may seem most appropriate, and shall make an annual report of their

proceedings, including a full statement of accounts, at each Annual Meeting. This report shall be made in print for distribution to the members.

9. No officer of the Society shall be competent to contract debts in the name of the Society, and no expenditure shall be made without a vote of the Council.

10. A majority of the Council shall form a quorum for the transaction of business.

11. Any person distinguished for his interest in the purposes of the Society, or who has rendered it valuable service, may be chosen an Honorary Member at any regular meeting of the Society, and shall be entitled to all its privileges without annual assessment.

12. The preceding rules may be changed at any time by unanimous vote of the Council.

THE DANTE PRIZE

The Society offers an annual prize of one hundred dollars for the best essay by a student in any department of Harvard University, or by a graduate of not more than three years' standing, on a subject drawn from the life or works of Dante. The competition is open to students and graduates of similar standing of any college or university in the United States.

For the year 1916–1917 the following subjects were proposed:

1. *A study of the vocabulary of Dante's Lyrics.*
2. *The classification of Dante's Miscellaneous Lyrics.*
3. *The influence of Boethius on the Vita Nuova and the Convivio.*
4. *A discussion of the authorship of Il Fiore.*
5. *A study of Dante's influence upon English literature (or upon any single author or period).*
6. *The relation of Dante's theological doctrines to the present teachings of the Church of Rome.*
7. *The relation of modern scientific discovery to Dante's conception of the divine order of the universe.*
8. *The main reasons for the increase of interest in the Divina Commedia during the past fifty years.*
9. *Dante and Cecco d'Ascoli.*
10. *A study of the decline of Dante's influence in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.*
11. *Modern traits in Dante.*
12. *Dante in the anecdotic literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.*
13. *The influence of Guido Cavalcanti on Dante.*
14. *A criticism of Torraca's edition of the Divina Commedia.*

Essays must be deposited with the Dean of Harvard College Cambridge, Mass., on or before the *first day of May.*

Essayists are at liberty to write on any one of the subjects which have been proposed in the years during which the Dante Prize has been offered, or to propose new subjects for the approval of the Council of the Society.

On the title-page must be written an assumed name and a statement of the writer's standing, i.e. whether he is a graduate or an undergraduate (and of what college or university); if he is an undergraduate, to what class he belongs, and to what department of the college or university. Under cover with the essay must be sent a sealed letter containing the true name and address of the writer, and superscribed with his assumed name.

The essays must be written upon letter paper, of good quality, of the quarto size, with a margin of not less than one inch at the top, at the bottom, and on each side, so that they may be bound up without injury to the writing. The sheets on which the essay is written must be securely stitched together.

The judges of the essays are a committee of the Dante Society.

In case the judges decide that no essay submitted to them deserves the full prize, they are at liberty to award one or two prizes of fifty dollars, or to award no prize.

The Dante Society has the privilege of retaining and depositing in the Dante Collection of the Harvard College Library any or all essays offered in competition for the Dante Prize, whether successful or not.

Since its establishment the Dante Prize (in full or in part) has been awarded to the following persons:

HEINRICH CONRAD BIERWIRTH 1887

For an essay entitled *Dante's Obligations to the Schoolmen, especially to Thomas Aquinas.*

GEORGE RICE CARPENTER 1888

For an essay entitled *The Interpretation and Reconciliation of the Different Accounts of his Experiences after the Death of Beatrice, given by Dante in the Vita Nuova and the Convito.*

CHARLES STERRETT LATHAM 1890

For an essay entitled *A Translation into English of Dante's Letters, with Explanatory and Historical Comments.*

KENNETH MCKENZIE 1894

For an essay entitled *The Rise of the Dolce Stil Nuovo.*

JEREMIAH DENIS MATTHIAS FORD 1895

For an essay entitled *Dante's Influence upon Spanish Literature during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries.*

ANNETTE FISKE 1897

For an essay entitled *Dante's Obligations to Old French and Provençal Lyric Poetry.*

ARTHUR NEWTON PEASLEE 1900

For an essay entitled *A Metrical Rhyming Translation of the Three Canzoni of the Convito.*

HENRY LATIMER SEAVER 1901

For an essay entitled *A Translation of the Canzoni in the Convito.*

ALAIN CAMPBELL WHITE 1902

The Latham Prize for an essay entitled *A Translation of the Quaestio de Aqua et Terra, and a Discussion of its Authenticity.*

ALPHONSO DE SALVIO 1902

For an essay entitled *The Verse Endings in the Divina Commedia in which Dante has made "li vocaboli dire nelle sue rime altro che quello ch' erano appo gli altri dicitori usati di sprimere."*

FRITZ HAGENS 1903

For an essay entitled *A Critical Comment of the De Vulgari Eloquio.*

CHANDLER RATHFON POST 1906

For an essay entitled *The Beginnings of the Influence of Dante in Castilian and Catalan Literature.*

ALEXANDER GUY HOLBORN SPIERS 1907

For an essay entitled *Characteristics of the Vita Nuova.*

RALPH HAYWARD KENISTON 1909

For an essay entitled *The Dante Tradition in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.*

ROGER THEODORE LAFFERTY 1912

For an essay entitled *The Philosophy of Dante.*

GEORGE HUSSEY GIFFORD 1913

For an essay entitled *Expressions of Gratitude in Dante.*

RICHARD AGER NEWHALL 1914

For an essay entitled *Italian Ghibellinism as reflected in Dante.*

AMOS PHILIP MCMAHON 1915

For an essay entitled *On Dante's De Monarchia. A Study of Imperialism in Mediæval and in Modern Times.*

ANNUAL REPORT

The thirty-sixth annual meeting of the Dante Society was held at the house of the Secretary, Professor F. N. Robinson, Longfellow Park, Cambridge, on the evening of May 15, 1917. The usual reports of the Secretary and Treasurer were presented and accepted.

The Secretary reported that one essay had been offered in competition for the Dante Prize, but had not been found worthy of any award.

On recommendation of a committee appointed by the President, the following officers were elected: President, Professor C. H. Grandgent; Vice President, Professor F. N. Robinson; Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. G. B. Weston; Librarian, Mr. W. C. Lane; Council, Miss Katharine V. Spencer, Professor J. D. M. Ford, Professor C. R. Post.

The President, in conclusion, read a paper on the character of Matelda and the possible identification of her with "Primavera."

The council take pleasure in publishing with the present report an essay by an honorary member of the Society, Dr. Paget Toynbee, on the "History of the Letters of Dante from the Fourteenth Century to the Present Day."

Publication of the present report has been much delayed by war conditions. It is hoped to issue the thirty-seventh report in the course of the present year.

GEORGE BENSON WESTON
Secretary

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., March 7, 1919

HISTORY OF THE LETTERS OF DANTE FROM THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

PAGET TOYNBEE

That Dante was the author of numerous letters, some of which were in the nature of political manifestoes, while others were more or less concerned with his own personal interests, we know from various sources.

In the first place we have Dante's own testimony in the *Vita Nuova*, where he refers (§ 31) to a letter which he says he addressed to the principal personages of the city of Florence after the death of Beatrice, which took place on the evening of June 8, 1290.[1] He quotes the beginning of this letter ("Quomodo sedet sola civitas!"),[2] but excuses himself for not transcribing more than the opening words on the ground that the letter was in Latin, and it was not his intention to include in the *Vita Nuova* anything that was not written in the vulgar tongue.[3]

The earliest independent testimony is that furnished by two of Dante's contemporaries, namely the astrologer-poet Francesco degli Stabili, better known as Cecco d' Ascoli, who was burned as a free-thinker at Florence six years after Dante's death; and the chronicler Giovanni Villani, who was Dante's neighbor in Florence, and, as his nephew Filippo records,

[1] *Vita Nuova*, § 30, ll. 1–6; see my *Dante Studies and Researches*, pp. 61–64.

[2] This letter, of which no other trace has been preserved, is not to be confounded, as it has been by some, with another letter of Dante, that addressed to the Italian Cardinals (*Epist.* viii), which begins with the same quotation from *Lamentations* (i, 1).

[3] "Poichè la gentilissima donna fu partita da questo secolo, rimase tutta la cittade quasi vedova, dispogliata di ogni dignitade, ond' io, ancora lagrimando in questa desolata cittade, scrissi a' principi della terra alquanto della sua condizione, pigliando quello cominciamento di Geremia profeta: *Quomodo sedet sola civitas!* ... E se alcuno volesse me riprendere di ciò, che non scrivo qui le parole che seguitano a quelle allegate, scusomene, perocchè lo intendimento mio non fu da principio di scrivere altro che per volgare: onde, conciossiacosachè le parole, che seguitano a quelle che sono allegate, sieno tutte latine, sarebbe fuori del mio intendimento se io le scrivessi" (§ 31, ll. 1–21).

was a personal friend of the poet ("Patruus meus Johannes Villani hystoricus . . . Danti fuit amicus et sotius").[4] Cecco d'Ascoli in the third book of his encyclopædic poem *L' Acerba* treats of the origin of nobility, which he says had already been treated of by the Florentine poet in his polished verse:

> Fu già trattato con le dolci rime
> E definito il nobile valore
> Dal Fiorentino con l'acute lime;

the reference, of course, being to the *canzone* "Le dolci rime d'amor, ch'io solia" prefixed to the fourth book of the *Convivio*. Cecco controverts Dante's theory, and maintains that nobility is due to the influence of one of the heavens, namely that of Mercury, upon the individual possessed of ancient blood; "but hereupon," he interjects, "Dante wrote to me to express a doubt, saying: 'Two sons are born at a birth, and the elder turns out more noble than the other, or vice versa, as I have known before now. I am returning to Ravenna and shall not depart thence again. Tell me, you of Ascoli, what have you to say to this?' And I wrote back to Dante . . .

> Ma qui me scrisse dubitando Dante:
> Son doi figlioli nati in uno parto,
> E più gentil si mostra quel davante,
> Et ciò converso, come già vedi.
> Torno a Ravenna, e de li non mi parto.
> Dime, Esculano, quel che tu credi.
> Rescrissi a Dante: Intendi tu che leggi . . ."

and he then proceeds to develop his argument.

This correspondence with Cecco d'Ascoli must have taken place during the last three or four years of Dante's life, while he was the guest of Guido Novello da Polenta at Ravenna, that is, probably, not earlier than 1317.

Villani's testimony is contained in the ninth book of his *Cronica*, a chapter of which, under the year 1321, the year of Dante's death, is devoted to a brief biographical account of his distinguished fellow-citizen (ix, 136: "Chi fu il poeta Dante Alighieri di Firenze"). In this account,

[4] See § 22 of Filippo Villani's *Comento al primo canto dell' Inferno* (ed. G. Cugnoni, p. 79).

in which he gives an enumeration of Dante's most important writings, after mentioning the *Vita Nuova* and the *canzoni*, Villani says:

This Dante, when he was in exile, wrote among others, three noble letters, one of which he sent to the government of Florence, complaining of his undeserved exile; the second he sent to the Emperor Henry when he was besieging Brescia,[5] reproaching him for his delay, after the manner of the prophets of old; and the third he sent to the Italian Cardinals at the time of the vacancy of the Holy See after the death of Pope Clement, urging them to agree together in electing an Italian Pope. These letters were written in Latin, in a lofty style, fortified with admirable precepts and authorities, and were greatly commended by men of wisdom and discernment.[6]

Of the three letters specifically mentioned by Villani, two have been preserved; namely, that to the Emperor Henry (*Epist.* vii) and that to the Italian Cardinals (*Epist.* viii). The third, that to the Florentine government, which is perhaps identical with one of those mentioned by a subsequent authority, Leonardo Bruni,[7] has not come down to us.

Valuable evidence, direct and indirect, is supplied in the next generation by Boccaccio, who, in his *Vita di Dante*, written probably between 1357 and 1362,[8] says that the poet "wrote many prose epistles in Latin, of which a number are still in existence";[9] and who certainly had first-hand knowledge of at least six of the letters now extant. These are the letter to the Emperor Henry VII (*Epist.* vii) and that to a friend in Florence (*Epist.* ix), of which use is made in chapters five and twelve of the *Vita di Dante*;[10] the letter to Can Grande (*Epist.* x), which is largely utilized in the first and fifth *Lezioni* of the *Comento sopra la Commedia*; the letter to Moroello Malaspina (*Epist.* iii), portions of which are incorporated in the letter *Ignoto Militi* (that beginning "Mavortis miles

[5] Actually Cremona.

[6] "Quando fu in esilio . . . in tra l'altre fece tre nobili pistole; l'una mandò al reggimento di Firenze dogliendosi del suo esilio sanza colpa; l'altra mandò allo 'mperadore Arrigo quand' era all' assedio di Brescia, riprendendolo della sua stanza, quasi profetizzando; la terza a' cardinali italiani, quand' era la vacazione dopo la morte di papa Clemente, acciocchè s'accordassono a eleggere papa italiano; tutte in latino con alto dettato, e con eccellenti sentenzie e autoritadi, le quali furono molto commendate da' savi intenditori."

[7] See below, p. 8.

[8] See Oskar Hecker, *Boccaccio-Funde*, p. 154.

[9] "Fece ancora questo valoroso poeta molte epistole prosaiche in latino, delle quali ancora appariscono assai" (§ 16, ed. Macrì-Leone, p. 74).

[10] §§ 5, 12, ed. Macrì-Leone, pp. 29, 59.

extrenue");[11] and the letters to the Pistojan exile, commonly identified with Cino da Pistoja (*Epist.* iv), and to the Italian Cardinals (*Epist.* viii), which, together with the letter to the Florentine friend already mentioned, have been preserved in a MS., the only known MS. containing them, written by Boccaccio's own hand.[12]

The letter to Can Grande, it may be observed, was known in one form or another to several of the fourteenth-century commentators on the *Commedia* besides Boccaccio, namely to Guido da Pisa (c. 1324), Jacopo della Lana (c. 1326), the author of the *Ottimo Comento* (c. 1334), Pietro di Dante (1340–1341), Francesco da Buti (1385–1395), and Filippo Villani (1391);[13] but of these, Filippo Villani, who in his inaugural lecture delivered in 1391, as occupant of the Dante chair at Florence, refers to the letter as "quoddam introductorium [nostri poetae] super cantu primo Paradisi ad dominum Canem de la Scala destinatum,"[14] is the only one who mentions that it was addressed to Can Grande.

Of special importance is the testimony of the next witness, Leonardo Bruni of Arezzo (otherwise known as Leonardo Aretino), the author of the most valuable, from the critical point of view, of the early lives of Dante. Bruni was not only the most distinguished humanist of his day, but as secretary to several Popes[15] and Chancellor of the Florentine Republic, and as historian of the Republic, he was experienced in the handling of State papers and in the appraisement of documentary evidence, important qualifications possessed in an equal degree by no other of the early biographers of Dante. He sets out to write as a

[11] The text of Boccaccio's letter is printed in full, with the parallel passages from Dante's letter, by G. Vandelli, in *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*, N. S., VII, 64–67.

[12] This is the Laurentian MS. (XXIX, 8), which has been shown by Henri Hauvette to be written, so far as the portions relating to Dante are concerned, in Boccaccio's autograph (see Hauvette's *Notes sur des Manuscrits Autographes de Boccace à la Bibliothèque Laurentienne*, pp. 22 ff.).

[13] See Moore, *Studies in Dante*, iii, pp. 345 ff.; and Boffito, *L'Epistola di Dante Alighieri a Cangrande della Scala*, pp. 1–2, and *Appendice*.

[14] See §§ 3 and 9 of his *Comento* (ed. Cugnoni, pp. 28, 33).

[15] As secretary to Pope John XXIII, Bruni was in attendance at the Council of Constance, where, as Dr. Moore points out (*Dante and his Early Biographers*, p. 65), he would have met Giovanni da Serravalle, the translator and commentator of the *Divina Commedia*, who is responsible for the interesting but unhappily not otherwise authenticated statement, that Dante came to England and was a student at Oxford — a matter to which Bruni makes no reference.

serious historian, with the express purpose of supplying the practical deficiencies of Boccaccio's biography, which he holds to be overburdened with details of lovers' sighs and tears, and such like trivialities, to the neglect of the weightier matters of life, as though, he says, man were born into this world for no other purpose than to figure in a tale of the *Decameron*.[16] Bruni's statements, therefore, as to matters of fact, of which he claims to have had personal cognizance, are entitled to the respect due to a writer of established reputation and authority. Among such statements in his *Vita di Dante*, which was written in 1436, by way of diversion, after the completion of his translation of the *Poetics* of Aristotle, and while he was still engaged upon the last books of his history of Florence, are several of the highest interest relating to the letters of Dante.

Bruni mentions that he had himself seen several letters written by Dante's own hand, and he describes the handwriting — the only description that has come down to us — as being "fine and slender and very accurate": "Di sua mano egregiamente disegnava. Fu ancora scrittore perfetto, ed era la lettera sua magra, e lunga, e molto corretta, secondo io ho veduto in alcune epistole di sua propria mano scritte" — a statement which recurs in another work of his, the *Dialogus ad Petrum Histrum*, where, speaking of Dante, he says: "legi nuper quasdam ejus litteras quas ille videbatur peraccurate scripsisse: erant enim propria manu atque ejus sigillo obsignatae." "Scrisse molte epistole in prosa," he says in his list of the poet's works in the *Vita*, and in the course of the work he specifically mentions or refers to at least half a dozen, giving in the case of one of them a long quotation in Dante's own words,[17] and in the case of another the opening sentence.

[16] "Mi parve che il nostro Boccaccio, dolcissimo e suavissimo uomo, così scrivesse la vita, e i costumi di tanto sublime poeta, come se a scrivere avesse il Filocolo, o il Filostrato, o la Fiammetta; perocchè tutta d'amore, e di sospiri, e di cocenti lagrime è piena; come se l'uomo nascesse in questo mondo solamente per ritrovarsi in quelle dieci giornate amorose, nelle quali da donne innamorate, e da giovani leggiadri raccontate furono le cento Novelle; e tanto s'infiamma in queste parti d'amore, che le gravi e sustanzievoli parti della vita di Dante lascia in dietro, e trapassa con silenzio, ricordando le cose leggieri, e tacendo le gravi. Io dunque mi posi in cuore per mio spasso scriver di nuovo la vita di Dante, con maggior notizia delle cose stimabili: nè questo faccio per derogare al Boccaccio; ma perchè lo scriver mio sia quasi un supplimento allo scriver di lui."

[17] Bruni gives the quotation in Italian, with the remark "queste sono le parole sue"; but the original, like the rest of Dante's letters with which we are acquainted, was doubtless written in Latin.

The first letter mentioned by Bruni is in connection with the battle of Campaldino, the decisive victory of the Florentine Guelfs over the Ghibellines of Arezzo on June 11, 1289, at which Dante, he says, was present as a combatant, as he himself relates in a letter in which he gives an account of the battle, accompanied by a plan of the operations.[18] The next has reference to Dante's election to the Priorate, "from which," he states, "sprang Dante's exile from Florence and all the adverse fortunes of his life, as he himself writes in one of his letters, the words of which are as follows:

> All my woes and all my misfortunes had their origin and commencement with my unlucky election to the Priorate; of which Priorate, although I was not worthy in respect of worldly wisdom, yet in respect of loyalty and of years I was not unworthy of it; inasmuch as ten years had passed since the battle of Campaldino, where the Ghibelline party was almost entirely broken and brought to an end; on which occasion I was present, no novice in arms, and was in great fear, and afterwards greatly elated, by reason of the varying fortunes of that battle.

These are his words."[19]

In another letter recorded by Bruni Dante defends himself from a charge of favoritism during his Priorate in recalling the exiled Bianchi from Sarzana, while the Neri remained in banishment at Castello della Pieve. To this charge, says Bruni, Dante replied that when the exiles

[18] "Questa battaglia racconta Dante in una sua epistola, e dice esservi stato a combattere, e disegna la forma della battaglia."

[19] "Da questo priorato nacque la cacciata sua, e tutte le cose avverse, che egli ebbe nella vita, secondo lui medesimo scrive in una sua epistola, della quale le parole son queste: 'Tutti li mali, e tutti l'inconvenienti miei dalli infausti comizi del mio priorato ebbero cagione e principio; del quale priorato benchè per prudenza io non fussi degno, nientedimeno per fede, e per età, non ne era indegno, perocchè dieci anni erano già passati dopo la battaglia di Campaldino, nella quale la parte Ghibellina fu quasi al tutto morta e disfatta, dove mi trovai non fanciullo nell' armi, e dove ebbi temenza molta, e nella fine grandissima allegrezza, per li vari casi di quella battaglia.' Queste sono le parole sue."

Bruni mentions this letter also in his account of the battle of Campaldino in his *Historiae Florentinae*: "Dantes Alagherii poeta in epistola quadam scribit se in hoc praelio juvenem fuisse in armis, et ab initio quidem pugnae, hostem longe superiorem fuisse, adeo ut a Florentinis multum admodum timeretur. Ad extremum autem victoriam partam esse, tantamque inimicorum stragem in eo praelio factam, ut pene eorum nomen ad internecionem deleretur" (Lib. IV, p. 63, ed. Argentorati, MDCX).

were recalled from Sarzana he was no longer in office, and consequently could not be held responsible; and that moreover this recall was due to the illness and death of Guido Cavalcanti, who was attacked by malaria at Sarzana, and succumbed not long after.[20] Bruni then tells us that after his own exile Dante, in order to obtain his recall, wrote many letters to individual members of the Florentine government, as well as to the people of Florence ("scrisse più volte non solamente a' particulari cittadini del reggimento, ma ancora al popolo"), among the rest one of some length, beginning "Populе mee, quid feci tibi?" — a sentence, which in a till recently unrecorded version of Bruni's *Vita*, to which I have called attention in a previous *Report*,[21] is amplified by the completion of the quotation from *Micah* vi. 3, into "Populе mee quid feci tibi? aut in quo molestatus [for *molestus*] fui responde mihi." When, however, continues Bruni, the Emperor Henry VII crossed the Alps, Dante changed his tone, and began to write in abusive terms to the Florentines, calling them "scellerati e cattivi," and threatening them with the vengeance of the Emperor, against whose might all resistance would be vain. But when the Emperor, whose advance against Florence had been urged by Dante (an obvious allusion to Dante's letter to the Emperor), actually made his appearance under its walls, Dante in a

[20] "Essendo adunque la città in armi e in travagli, i priori per consiglio di Dante provvidero di fortificarsi della moltitudine del popolo; e quando furono fortificati, ne mandarono a confini gli uomini principali delle due sette, i quali furono questi, messer Corso Donati, messer Geri Spini, messer Giacchinotto de' Pazzi, messer Rosso della Tosa, e altri con loro. Tutti questi erano per la parte nera, e furono mandati a' confini al Castello della Pieve in quel di Perugia. Dalla parte de' Bianchi furon mandati a' confini a Serezzana messer Gentile, e messer Torrigiano de' Cerchi, Guido Cavalcanti, Baschiera della Tosa, Baldinaccio Adimari, Naldo di messer Lottino Gherardini, e altri. Questo diede gravezza assai a Dante, e contuttochè lui si scusi, come uomo senza parte, nientedimanco fu riputato, che pendesse in parte bianca . . .; e accrebbe l'invidia, perchè quella parte di cittadini, che fu confinata a Serezzana, subito ritornò a Firenze, e l'altra, ch' era confinata a Castello della Pieve si rimase di fuori. A questo risponde Dante, che, quando quella da Serezzana furono rivocati, esso era fuori dell' uficio del priorato, e che a lui non si debba imputare: più dice, che la ritornata loro fu per l'infermità, e morte di Guido Cavalcanti, il quale ammalò a Serezzana per l'aere cattiva, e poco appresso morì." Dante's term of office expired on August 15, 1300; Guido Cavalcanti was buried at Florence on August 29; so that his death must have taken place within a few days of his return from exile.

[21] See "An Unrecorded Seventeenth Century Version of the *Vita di Dante* of Leonardo Bruni," in *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report* (1912).

further letter expressed his intention on patriotic grounds of not personally assisting at the siege of his native city.[22] Finally Bruni refers to a letter (which may or may not be identical with the letter "Populemee," already mentioned) in which Dante gives an inventory of his personal possessions in lands and household goods.[23]

Of the letters specified or referred to by Bruni in his *Vita* two only are now extant, namely the abusive letter to the Florentines (*Epist.* vi), and that to the Emperor Henry (*Epist.* vii). The letter "Populemee" may perhaps be identified with the first of those mentioned by Villani[24] — that written by Dante to complain of his undeserved exile from Florence. For the remainder Bruni is our sole authority.

Giannozzo Manetti, who wrote a life of Dante not many years after Bruni, of whose *Vita* he largely availed himself, has no new information to give about the letters in general. In speaking of Dante's writings he merely remarks: "In Latino sermone multas epistolas scripsit." He does specify one particular letter, however, elsewhere; and incidentally in connection with it he uses a significant phrase which makes it appear that he must himself have been acquainted with the letters in question, namely, that written by Dante to the Florentines at the time of the

[22] Dante makes no such personal reference in the letters to Henry VII and to the Florentines which have come down to us; Bruni must therefore be referring to another letter, addressed either to the Emperor or to the Florentines.

[23] "Cercando con buone opere, e con buoni portamenti riacquistare la grazia di poter tornare in Firenze per ispontanea rivocazione di chi reggeva la terra . . . scrisse più volte non solamente a' particulari cittadini del reggimento, ma ancora al popolo; e intra l'altre un' epistola assai lunga, che incomincia, *Populemee quid feci tibi?* Essendo in questa speranza di ritornare per via di perdono, sopravvenne l'elezione d' Arrigo di Luzinborgo Imperadore; per la cui elezione prima, e poi la passata sua, essendo tutta Italia sollevata in speranza di grandissime novità, Dante non potè tenere il proposito suo dell' aspettare grazia, ma levatosi coll' animo altiero cominciò a dir male di quelli che reggevano la terra, appellandoli scellerati e cattivi, e minacciando loro la debita vendetta per la potenza dell' Imperadore, contro la quale, diceva esser manifesto che essi non avrebbon potuto avere scampo alcuno. Pure il tenne tanto la riverenza della patria, venendo l'Imperadore contro a Firenze, e ponendosi a campo presso alla porta, non vi volle essere, secondo lui scrive, contuttochè confortatore fusse stato di sua venuta. . . .

"Case in Firenze ebbe assai decenti . . . possessioni in Camerata, e nella Piacentina, e in Piano di Ripoli: suppellettile abundante, e preziosa, secondo lui scrive."

[24] See above, p. 3. It will be noted that Bruni makes no reference to the letter to the Italian Cardinals (*Epist.* viii) mentioned by Villani.

advent of Henry VII into Italy (*Epist.* vi). Bruni, as we have seen, states that in this letter Dante wrote abusively to the Florentines, calling them knaves and scoundrels. Manetti, who when he follows Bruni usually follows him so closely as almost to echo his words, in this instance adds a detail which he could not have derived from Bruni's *Vita*. When the Emperor, he says, sat down before Florence to besiege it, the Florentine exiles flocked to his camp from all sides, and Dante full of hope and no longer able to contain himself, indicted an insulting letter "to the Florentines within the city, as he himself calls them" — "Proinde Dantes quoque se ulterius continere non potuit, quin spe plenus epistolam quandam *ad Florentinos, ut ipse vocat, intrinsecos* contumeliosam sane scriberet, in qua eos acerbissime insectatur." This letter, as has already been mentioned, happens to be one of those which have come down to us. Manetti's reference to the title of it, which runs: "Dantes Alagherii Florentinus et exul immeritus scelestissimis *Florentinis intrinsecis*," is unmistakable, and conveys the impression that he had a personal knowledge of at least this one of Dante's letters*, though, unlike Bruni, he does not inform us of the fact. That this was actually the case has recently been demonstrated by Zenatti in his *Dante e Firenze*,[25]

* *Supplementary Note.* Since this paper was written I have by chance discovered the source of Manetti's information with regard to this letter of Dante, of which I had previously supposed, with Zenatti (*Dante e Firenze*, pp. 418–419), that he must have had first-hand knowledge, owing to his unmistakable reference to the title. Manetti's authority was not the letter itself, but the following passage in Bruni's *Historiae Florentinae*, as is obvious from the similarity of the language: "Herricus ... superatis Alpibus, in citeriorem Galliam descendisse nunciabatur, et quidquid ubique fuerat exulum Florentinorum, ad illum concurrisse, adeo spe firmâ victoriae, ut jam inde bona inimicorum inter se partirentur. Extat Dantis poetae epistola amarissimis referta contumeliis, quam ipse hac inani fiducia exultans, contra Florentinos, ut ipse vocat, intrinsecos scripsit. Et quos ante id tempus honorificentissimis compellare solebat verbis, tunc hujus spe supra modum elatus, acerbissime insectari non dubitat" (Lib. IV, p. 88, ed. Argentorati, MDCX). Manetti's acquisition of the MS. containing the letter must have been subsequent to the compilation of his *Vita Dantis*, otherwise he would surely have utilized it for the purposes of his work.

[25] *Dante e Firenze: Prose Antiche con note illustrative ed appendici*, di Oddone Zenatti, pp. 370–375 note, 414–419.

where he shows that Manetti was at one time in possession of a MS. which contained no less than nine letters written by, or attributed to, Dante, this MS. being the now famous Vatican MS. (*Cod. Vat.-Palat. Lat.* 1729), of which we shall have more to say later.[26]

The next piece of evidence is supplied, not by a biographer of Dante, but by a fifteenth-century historian, namely Flavio Biondo of Forlì, who in his *Historiarum ab inclinato Romano Imperio Decades*, which was completed in or about the year 1440, states that he had seen at Forlì letters written by Pellegrino Calvi, secretary of Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi, the Ghibelline leader in Forlì, which had been dictated by Dante, and in which Dante's name frequently occurs — "Peregrini Calvi foroliviensis, Scarpettae epistolarum magistri, extantes literae, crebram Dantis mentionem habentes, a quo dictabantur";[27] and in another passage he makes special mention of a letter written by Dante in his own name and in that of the exiled Bianchi to Can Grande della Scala at the time of the advent of the Emperor Henry VII into Italy, in which Dante gave an account of the insolent reply returned by the Florentines to the ambassadors of the Emperor, — a letter of which, as Biondo tells us, a copy was taken by Pellegrino Calvi — "Dantes Aldegerius, Forolivii tunc agens, in epistola ad Canem Grandem Scaligerum veronensem, partis Albae extorrum et suo nomine data, quam Peregrinus Calvus scriptam reliquit, talia dicit de responsione a Florentinis urbem tenentibus tunc facta."[28]

Of these letters, which must be assigned to the period of Dante's presumed residence at Forlì in 1303 and 1310, no trace has been preserved. Carlo Troya, who drew attention to these statements of Flavio Biondo with regard to Dante in his *Veltro Allegorico di Dante* (Florence, 1826)[29] and *Veltro Allegorico de' Ghibellini* (Naples, 1856),[30] records in the latter work that, as the result of exhaustive enquiries as to the fate of the documents mentioned by Biondo, he learned that the Ordelaffi papers had been entrusted to the charge of a nun of the Ordelaffi family for safe custody during a period of civil commotion, and that she, in an

[26] See below, p. 25.
[27] See *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*, No. 8 (1892), p. 22.
[28] See *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*, No. 8 (1892), p. 26.
[29] Pp. 60, 125.
[30] Pp. 205–206.

evil hour, apparently through fear of being compromised if they were found in her possession, had consigned the whole to the flames.[81]

With the next biographer of Dante, Giovanni Mario Filelfo, the last of the early biographers who has any addition to make to the information supplied by his predecessors, the number of Dante's letters increases in a most remarkable manner. Filelfo, who was the son of the famous humanist Francesco Filelfo, himself a student and expounder of Dante, wrote his life of Dante, which is in Latin, in or about the year 1467, as appears from a letter accompanying a copy of the work written from Verona in December of that year by Pietro Alighieri, Dante's great-grandson, to Pietro de' Medici and Tommaso Soderini in Florence, in which it is referred to as having been recently completed — "munusculum hoc nuper mihi de vita proavi mei Dantis ab eloquentissimo oratore, et laurea insignito Mario Philelfo editum, Magnificentiis Vestris mittere decrevi."

In this work, which it may be observed in passing has a peculiar interest for students of Dante, in that here for the first time we meet with the theory that Dante's Beatrice was a mythical not a real personage, — about as real as Pandora, is the author's way of putting it, — Filelfo makes very free use of the *Vita* of Leonardo Bruni. He does not, however, confine himself to merely repeating what Bruni says, but embellishes his statements with characteristic additions of his own. Thus, in his account of Dante's letter about the battle of Campaldino he makes Dante claim not only to have been present, but to have taken a leading part in the engagement: "Hanc quidem et pugnam et victoriam recitat ipse Dantes sua quadam epistola, declaratque se iisce interfuisse *ac praefuisse* rebus, exprimitque omnem ejus proelii ordinem." Again, where Bruni simply mentions that Dante, in order to obtain his recall from exile, wrote to individual members of the government as well as to the people of Florence, Filelfo states that he wrote letters to several particular citizens whom he believed to be more upright than the rest, and also sundry very lengthy letters to the Florentine people: "Patriae gratiam assidue cupiens, plures epistolas nedum ad nonnullos misit cives, *quos intelligeret virtuti dedicatiores*, sed ad populum longiusculas admodum dedit litteras." Bruni's succinct description of Dante's handwriting, which

[81] *Veltro Allegorico de' Ghibellini*, p. 207.

has been quoted above, is amplified by Filelfo into a detailed statement as to Dante's delight in the exercise of the pen, and, so far as his ignorance of Greek would allow, the perfect accuracy of his spelling:

Delectabatur Dantes scribendi forma, et vetustate litterarum, scribebatque litteras modernas, tamen politissimas, sed longiores subtilioresque, ut se illa manu scriptas fatetur habuisse Leonardus Aretinus, qui fuit earum diligens inquisitor, sed orthographiam tenebat ad unguem, quantum poterat, sine litterarum graecarum cognitione, conficere.

The "many letters" with which Bruni credits Dante, in Filelfo's account become "letters innumerable," among which he proceeds to specify three in particular, now heard of for the first time, which he asserts were addressed by Dante respectively to the King of Hungary, to Pope Boniface VIII, and to his own son at Bologna, of each of which letters he professes to quote the opening sentences; and besides these, he adds, Dante wrote other letters also, too numerous to specify, which are in the hands of many persons at the present time:

Edidit et epistolas innumerabiles; aliam cujus est hoc principium ad invictissimum Hunnorum Regem: "Magna de te fama in omnes dissipata, rex dignissime, coegit me indignum exponere manum calamo, et ad tuam humanitatem accedere." Aliam, cujus est initium rursus ad Bonifacium Pontificem Maximum: "Beatitudinis tuae sanctitas nihil potest cogitare pollutum, quae vices in terris gerens Christi, totius est misericordiae sedes, verae pietatis exemplum, summae religionis apex." Aliam, qua filium alloquitur, qui Bononiae aberat, cujus hoc est principium: "Scientia, mi fili, coronat homines, et eos contentos reddit, quam cupiunt sapientes, negligunt insipientes, honorant boni, vituperant mali." Edidit alias, quas habent multi, mihi quidem est enumerare difficile.

If this very precise and circumstantial account of letters of Dante, of which no previous writer had made mention, could have been accepted as authentic, as it was by Filelfo's editor, Domenico Moreni, and by Pelli, Balbo, and others, it would have made a most interesting and valuable addition to our scanty information on the subject. Unfortunately, however, Filelfo is a writer whose unsupported assertions it is impossible to regard without grave suspicion, even when he claims, as he does with respect to his life of Dante, that he has recorded only what he knew of his own personal knowledge, or had seen with his own eyes — "ea dumtaxat refero, quae certo scio, quaeque ipse vidi, cetera non ausim

affirmare." Apart from palpable misstatements of fact, instances of which have been pointed out by Bartoli and others,[82] there are at least two demonstrable falsifications in this same work. When he comes to deal with the *De Monarchia* and the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, in his account of Dante's writings, Filelfo, as in the case of the three letters above mentioned, makes a parade of quoting the beginnings of each of these treatises:

Romano quidem stilo edidit opus, cui Monarchiae dedit nomen, cujus hoc est principium: " Magnitudo ejus, qui sedens in throno cunctis dominatur, in caelo stans omnia videt, nusquam exclusus, nullibi est inclusus, ita dividit gratia munera, ut mutos aliquando faciat loqui." Edidit et opus de Vulgari Eloquentia hoc principio: " Ut Romana lingua in totum est orbem nobilitata terrarum, ita nostri cupiunt nobilitare suam; proptereaque difficilius est hodie recte nostra quam perite latina quidquam dicere."

A glance at the actual beginnings of the *De Monarchia* and *De Vulgari Eloquentia* will suffice to show that these alleged quotations by Filelfo do not bear the smallest resemblance to what Dante really wrote, and are in fact unblushing fabrications on Filelfo's part, — fabrications, it may be explained, in which it was comparatively safe for him to indulge, in view of the circumstance that the treatises in question existed only in MS. at that time,[83] and that the MSS. were few and not easily accessible. Such being the case, we have no alternative but to conclude, as most recent critics have done, that the letters quoted as Dante's by Filelfo are equally apocryphal. It is not without significance in this connection that Filelfo's best known work, of which no less than eight editions were printed in the fifteenth century, was an *Epistolarium, seu de arte conficiendi epistolas opus*;[84] so that no doubt in his " confection " of these alleged letters of Dante he was but exercising himself in an art of which he was the professed exponent.

[82] See Bartoli, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, Vol. V, pp. 105–106; and Moore, *Dante and his Early Biographers*, pp. 95 ff.

[83] The *De Monarchia* was not printed till 1559, and the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (of which an Italian translation by Trissino was published in 1529) not till 1577.

[84] This work contains among other things a complete analysis of " the eighty possible categories under which epistles can fall." An example of each of these categories is given, and to each of them is subjoined a list of appropriate " sinonima " or stock phrases, such as " sinonima gratulatoria," " sinonima postulativa," " sinonima vituperatoria," " sinonima invectiva," and so on. The " exemplum " under the last heading is " Es una omnium voce sentina scelerum cloaca foetidissima "!

With Filelfo we take leave of the early biographers of Dante, subsequent notices, such as those of Landino and Vellutello,[35] containing nothing, so far as Dante's letters are concerned, but a repetition in a more or less meagre form of what had already appeared in the lives of Boccaccio or of Bruni.[36]

It was not till the middle of the sixteenth century that the first actual text of a letter of Dante was given to the world. This was in 1547, in which year was published in Florence a slim quarto of eighty pages, now exceedingly rare, entitled *Prose Antiche di Dante, Petrarcha et Boccaccio, et di Molti Altri Nobili et Virtuosi Ingegni, nuovamente raccolte.* The first piece in this volume, of which the editor, as well as printer, was the eccentric Anton Francesco Doni, is "Pistola di Dante Alighieri Poeta Fiorentino all' Imperator' Arrigo di Luzimborgo," and is in fact an Italian translation, in a very corrupt and mutilated text, of Dante's letter to the Emperor Henry VII, the Latin original of which, as we have seen, was known to Villani, Boccaccio, and Bruni. The last piece but one in the volume is a letter in Italian "Al Magnifico Messer Guido da Polenta, Signor da Ravenna," dated from Venice, March 30, 1314, and signed "L'umil servo vostro Dante Alighieri Fiorentino."

No indication is given by Doni as to the source from which these two letters were derived. As regards the genuineness of the Italian translation of the letter to Henry VII there can be no manner of doubt, inasmuch as numerous MSS. of it are in existence, and it more or less closely corresponds with the Latin text as we now have it. The letter to Guido da Polenta, however, stands on a very different footing. Not only has no MS. of this letter ever been heard of, but it bears on the face of it indubitable proofs of its falsity. The letter, which purports to be an account of Dante's experiences as envoy of Guido da Polenta to the

[35] Prefixed to their commentaries on the *Commedia*, first published respectively at Florence in 1481, and at Venice in 1544.

[36] It is interesting, however, to note that Vellutello was acquainted with Filelfo's life of Dante, of which he did not disdain to avail himself, though he severely criticizes the author on the score of his numerous irrelevancies, and of his disbelief in the reality of Beatrice: "Scrisse la vita di Dante dopo l'Aretino, Mario Filelfo in lingua latina, . . . introducendovi molte cose più tosto impertinenti che accomodate alla materia, e negando Beatrice essere stata donna vera, . . . come ancora molti sciocchi hanno detto di Laura celebrata dal Petrarca."

Venetian Republic to offer congratulations on the recent election of a new Doge, runs as follows:[87]

To the Magnificent Messer Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna.

Anything in the world should I sooner have expected to see, rather than what I have actually in person seen and experienced of the character of this exalted government. To quote the words of Virgil: "Minuit praesentia famam." I had imagined to myself that I should here find those noble and magnanimous Catos, those severe censors of depraved morals, in short everything which this people, in their most pompous and pretentious fashion, would have unhappy and afflicted Italy believe that they themselves specially represent. Do they not style themselves "rerum dominos gentemque togatam"? Oh truly unhappy and misguided populace, so insolently oppressed, so vilely governed, and so cruelly maltreated by these upstarts, these destroyers of ancient law, these perpetrators of injustice and corruption!

But what am I to say to you of the dense and bestial ignorance of these grave and reverend signiors? On coming into the presence of so ripe and venerable a council, in order not to derogate from your dignity and my own authority, I purposed to perform my office as your ambassador in that tongue, which along with the imperial power of fair Ausonia is daily declining, and is ever destined to decline; hoping perchance to find it throned in its majesty in this distant corner, hereafter to be spread abroad with the power of this state throughout the length and breadth of Europe, at the least. But alas! I could not have appeared more of a stranger and foreigner had I but just arrived from remotest Thule in the west. Nay, I should have been more likely to find an interpreter of my unknown tongue, if I had come to them from the fabled Antipodes, than to be listened to here with the eloquence of Rome upon my lips. For no sooner had I pronounced a few words of the exordium, which I had prepared in your name in felicitation of the recent election of this most serene Doge, namely: "Lux orta est justo, et rectis corde laetitia,"[88] than it was intimated to me that I must either provide myself with an interpreter, or speak in another language. Accordingly, whether more in amazement or indignation I know not, I began to make a short speech in the tongue which has been mine from the cradle; this, however, proved to be hardly more familiar or native to them than the Latin had been.

Hence it has come about, that instead of being the bearer to them of joy and gladness, I have been the sower, in the most fertile field of their ignorance, of the abundant seeds of wonder and confusion. And it is no matter for

[87] The original is printed among the letters of, or attributed to, Dante by Witte (*Epistola Apocrypha*), Torri (*Epist.* xi), Fraticelli (*Epist.* viii), and Giuliani (*Epist.* iv).

[88] From the Vulgate, *Psalm* xcvi, 11.

wonder if the Italian tongue is unintelligible to them, seeing that they are descended from Dalmatians and Greeks, and have brought no other contribution to this noble land than the vilest and most shameless practices, together with the abomination of every sort of unbridled licentiousness.

I have thought it incumbent on me, therefore, to send you this brief account of the mission which I have accomplished on your behalf; begging you at the same time, though you may always command my services, not to use me further on such like employments, from which you can look for no credit at any time, nor I for consolation.

I shall remain here for a few days in order to satisfy the natural appetite of my bodily eyes for the wonders and attractions of this place; after which I shall transport myself to that most welcome haven of my rest, under the gracious protection of your royal courtesy.

From Venice, this 30th day of March, 1314

Your humble servant, Dante Alighieri of Florence.

Apart from the manifest absurdity of the charge against the Venetians that they could understand neither Latin (which was in fact at that time in Venice, as elsewhere in Italy, the official language of the State) nor Italian, the following blunders chronological and otherwise have been pointed out amongst others as fatal to the pretensions of this letter to be considered authentic.[89] To begin with, all the available evidence goes to prove that Dante did not take refuge with Guido da Polenta at Ravenna till 1317 or 1318, that is to say, not till three or four years after the alleged date (1314) of this embassy to Venice. Secondly, in the year 1314 Guido da Polenta was not Lord of Ravenna, as he is styled in the letter, but Podestà of Cesena. Thirdly, the so-called "recent election" of the Doge (Gian Soranzo) had taken place more than a year and a half before, namely, on July 13, 1312. Finally, we have the damning fact that Dante, who claims in the *Commedia* that he knew the *Aeneid* "tutta quanta," is made to attribute to Virgil a quotation from Claudian, an author with whom there is no evidence that he had any acquaintance. To all of which may be added the further objections that the letter is written in Italian, instead of in Latin as we should naturally expect, and that it has a most decided "cinquecento" ring about it, the style being as unlike Dante's known epistolary style as it well could be.

[89] See Bartoli, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, Vol. V, pp. 237 ff.; and Scartazzini, *Dante in Germania*, Vol. II, pp. 303 ff.

Doni included Dante's letter to the Emperor Henry, with other pieces from the *Prose Antiche*, in a subsequent work, his *Zucca*, which he published at Venice in 1552; but he did not reprint the letter to Guido, of which it has not unnaturally been assumed that he himself was the fabricator. This letter nevertheless was accepted as genuine by Biscioni, who reproduced it, together with that to the Emperor, in his *Prose di Dante Alighieri e di Messer Giovanni Boccacci*, published at Florence in 1723; and it has also found supporters in Tasso (in his *Dialogo del Forno*, published in 1581) and Fontanini,[40] as well as in Torri,[41] Fraticelli,[42] and Scheffer-Boichorst,[43] among others of more recent date.

A few years after the publication of Doni's *Prose* we hear from several quarters of the letter to Can Grande (*Epist.* x), which, as has already been mentioned, was utilized by several of the early commentators on the *Commedia*, though, with the exception of Filippo Villani, they make no reference to it by name.[44] Giovan Batista Gelli, best known as the author of *I Capricci del Bottaio* (Englished not long after his death as *The Fearfull Fansies of the Florentine Couper*), who delivered a series of public lectures on Dante before the Florentine Academy at various times between 1541 and 1563, in a discussion in his eighth course, in 1562, as to the title *Commedia* bestowed by Dante on his poem, recapitulates what he had said on the subject in a previous lecture, and then proceeds as follows:

All that I told you on the former occasion as the expression of my own personal opinion, I to-day repeat to you as a matter of my own knowledge. For a year or two ago there came into my hands, through the good offices of the deceased Tommaso Santini, a fellow citizen of ours, a letter in Latin, which our Poet sent to the Lord Can Grande della Scala, Vicar General of the principality of Verona and of Vicenza, together with a presentation copy of the third cantica of his poem, namely the *Paradiso*. In which letter he treats of certain matters, with a view to the better understanding of his purpose in the poem, and among

[40] In his *Eloquenza Italiana*.

[41] See his *Epistole di Dante Allighieri edite e inedite*, pp. xvii–xviii, 71.

[42] See his *Opere minori di Dante*, Vol. III, pp. 476 ff. After examining the arguments on both sides, Fraticelli says: "Io non affermerò che la lettera appartenga indubbiamente al nostro Alighieri; ma posti in bilancia gli argomenti che dall' una e dall' altra parte si adducono, parmi che preponderino quelli che stanno per l' affermativa."

[43] In his *Aus Dantes Verbannung*; see Scartazzini, *Dante in Germania*, Vol. II, pp. 304 ff.

[44] See above, p. 4.

others of the reason why he gave to it this title of *Commedia*. He points out that Comedy differs from Tragedy in its subject matter, inasmuch as Tragedy in its beginning is admirable and quiet, but in its ending foul and horrible (these being our author's own expressions), whereas Comedy begins with an element of adversity, but in the end turns out happily — a circumstance, he adds, which has given rise to the employment by some letter-writers of the salutation, "tragicum principium, et comicum finem," as a substitute for the conventional greeting. Again, he shows that Comedy differs from Tragedy in the style of its diction, the language of Tragedy being lofty and inflated, while that of Comedy is unstudied and homely; whence he concludes [and Gelli here quotes the original text of Dante's letter]: "Et per hoc patet quod Comoedia dicitur praesens opus. Nam si ad materiam aspiciamus, a principio horribilis et foetida est, quia Infernus; in fine prospera, desiderabilis et grata, quia Paradisus. Ad modum loquendi, remissus est modus et humilis, quia locutio vulgaris, in qua et mulierculae comunicant; et sic patet, quia Comoedia dicitur." [45]

Gelli quotes the letter a second time in another lecture, of which only a fragment has been preserved, in connection with Dante's scathing apostrophe to Florence at the beginning of the twenty-sixth canto of the *Inferno*. "Not only," he says, "did Dante rebuke Florence in this place, and in numerous other passages in his works, but he twice in the letter he sent to Can Grande, Lord of Verona, with a copy of his poem, describes himself in these terms: 'Dantes Alagherius, Florentinus patria, sed non moribus.'" [46]

The Can Grande letter was known also to sundry other writers on Dante in the sixteenth century, contemporaries of Gelli (1498–1563), among others to Lodovico Castelvetro (1505–1571) of Modena, Vincenzo Borghini (1515–1580) of Florence, and Jacopo Mazzoni (1548–1598) of Cesena.[47] Castelvetro in his *Sposizione di Canti ventinove dell' Inferno di Dante* (first published in 1886) identifies the "Veltro" of *Inferno* i. 101 with Can Grande, to whom, he says, according to Boccaccio in his life of Dante, the poet dedicated the *Commedia*; "but," he continues, "I have

[45] *Epist.* x, ll. 218–225; see *Letture edite e inedite di Giovan Batista Gelli sopra la Commedia di Dante*, raccolte per cura di Carlo Negroni, Vol. II, p. 295.

[46] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 515.

[47] The letter was also quoted by Antonio degli Albizzi (1547–1626) in his (as yet unpublished) *Risposta al Discorso del Castravilla* (see Barbi, *Della Fortuna di Dante nel Cinquecento*, p. 102); and (later) by Benedetto Buonmattei (1581–1647) in *Quaderno Secondo per le lezioni su Dante* (see Boffito, *L' Epistola di D. A. a Cangrande della Scala*, p. 3, n. 3).

in my possession a MS. of a letter of Dante's, written in Latin, which begins 'Dantes Aligerius natione florentinus, non moribus, magno Cani etc.'; from which letter it clearly appears that Dante dedicated to Can Grande, not the whole poem, but the *Paradiso* only."[48] It should be noted that Castelvetro here misrepresents Boccaccio, who does not assert positively that Dante dedicated the *Commedia* as a whole to Can Grande, but states that opinions differed as to the dedication, inasmuch as, according to some, Dante dedicated the *Inferno* to Uguccione della Faggiuola, the *Purgatorio* to Moroello Malaspina, and the *Paradiso* to Frederick the Third of Sicily; while, according to others, he dedicated the whole poem to Can Grande.[49] Castelvetro quotes the title of the letter again, in his comment on *Inferno* xv. 69, as a proof that Dante obeyed Brunetto Latini's injunction to dissociate himself from the evil ways of the Florentines — "Da' lor costumi fa che tu ti forbi."[50]

Borghini makes use of the letter in his *Introduzione al Poema di Dante per l'Allegoria* (first printed in 1855), in which he quotes long extracts from the letter in the original Latin, namely §§ 7 and 8, and parts of §§ 15 and 16, to show with what object Dante wrote the *Commedia*, and the various senses in which he meant it to be interpreted; and part of § 32 for Dante's explanation why he did not continue his exposition of the poem, his reason being the "rei familiaris angustia."[51] Borghini says that the text of the letter as seen by him (which he evidently emended in the passages he has quoted) was so corrupt as to be hardly intelligible;[52] and after stating that it was at that time known to many persons ("in mano di molti"), he observes that by some of the old commentators on the *Commedia* the letter was prefixed to their commentary as the author's own preface to his poem — an interesting observation, which, however, is not confirmed by our present knowledge of the early commentaries.[53]

[48] *Sposizione*, p. 23.

[49] *Vita di Dante*, § 15, ed. Macrì-Leone, p. 72.

[50] *Sposizione*, p. 199.

[51] See *Studi sulla Divina Commedia di Galileo Galilei, Vincenzo Borghini, ed altri*; pubblicati per cura ed opera di Ottavo Gigli, pp. 155–157, 160.

[52] "Detta Epistola, che io ho veduta, è tanto scorretta, che a pena si può leggere" (*op. cit.*, p. 155).

[53] This observation may possibly have been suggested to Borghini by the *Praefatio incerti auctoris*, which accompanies the letter in some of the MSS., and was first printed by Baruffaldi in 1700 (see below, p. 21).

Mazzoni's mention of the letter occurs in the *Introduttione e Sommario* of the first volume of his celebrated *Difesa di Dante*, which was published at Cesena in 1587. In his summary of the contents of the last chapter of the first book[54] he says: "It is shown in this chapter that Dante's poem was composed by him in the form of a vision, as he himself has openly declared in his *Vita Nuova*, as well as in a Latin letter which he sent to Cane della Scala, explaining the purpose of the third cantica of his poem; which letter was sent to me from Florence a few days ago by Signor Domenico Mellini, a most worthy gentleman and lover of letters."

He then proceeds to excuse himself from discussing the letter at that point, on the ground that it was his intention to speak of it at length in his second volume. This second volume, however, which was not published till 1688, ninety years after Mazzoni's death, unfortunately contains no reference to the letter; whence it has been concluded either that his projected disquisition on the subject was never written, or that it was suppressed by his editor.

In the seventeenth century we find notice for the first time of the existence of the Latin text of the letter to the Emperor Henry VII. This occurs in the notes (first printed in 1636) on the *De Rebus Gestis Henrici Septimi* of Albertino Mussato by Lorenzo Pignoria of Padua (1571–1631), who states that he had in his own possession a MS. of this text; he identifies the letter with that mentioned by Villani, and with that printed in Italian by Doni, and promises to publish it — a promise which remained unfulfilled.

"Dantes vatum clarissimus," he writes, "hisce diebus epistolam scripsit Henrico, quam nacti in pervetusto codice, nostro manuscripto publici juris facere decrevimus, et describi curavimus seorsum in calce spicelegii nostri, cum aliis nonnullis ejusdem aevi monumentis; et ejusdem epistolae meminit Johannes Villanus, lib. 9, cap. 35. Quam etiam Italicè redditam vidimus et editam Florentiae, anno 1547."[55]

In the last year of this century (1700) the complete text of the letter to Can Grande was published at Venice in a literary periodical called *La Galleria di Minerva*,[56] to which it had been communicated two years

[54] In § 90 (numbered on the margin) of the *Introduttione e Sommario*, which is not paged in the original 1587 edition.

[55] See Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, X, 385. [56] Vol. III, pp. 220–228.

before by Girolamo Baruffaldi, sub-librarian of the public library at Ferrara, this being the first letter of Dante to be given to the world in the original Latin. In his dedicatory note to Giulio Cesare Grazzini, secretary of the Academy of the *Intrepidi* of Ferrara, Baruffaldi states that the letter, which he describes as "una antica e non pubblicata Pistola del divino Dante Alighieri," had been discovered a short time previously in a MS. in the collection of the well-known scholar and physician of Ferrara, Giuseppe Lanzoni (1663–1730), who had obligingly placed it at his disposal. Baruffaldi printed at the head of the letter a *Praefatio incerti Auctoris*, which runs as follows:

It was customary in former times for writers to prefix to their works a few introductory remarks, which the briefer they were, the more quickly they led up to the subject of the work in question, especially in the case of authors who were not gifted with the elegant and correct style of diction proper to professed teachers of rhetoric. I will hasten, therefore, to acquit myself of my task, lest, while studying to avoid prolixity, I should fall into that very fault. Suffice it then that in lieu of preface I present the reader with what the Poet wrote to Messer Cane, to whom he dedicated this third cantica, whereby his intention in the poem may the more easily be comprehended from the observations to which he himself gave expression in the following form.[57]

This preface, which occurs in four of the six known MSS.,[58] was reprinted by the eighteenth-century editors, but it has been discarded by the more recent editors of the letters of Dante.

The text of the letter as printed in the *Galleria di Minerva* was full of blunders, due either to the original scribe or to the copyist of the Lanzoni MS.; and in this corrupt form it continued to be reproduced for more than a hundred years. It may be mentioned that a collation with this text of the passages recorded above as having been quoted by Gelli and Borghini shows that the latter were not derived from the same MS. as the Baruffaldi text.

[57] "Praefari aliqua in initio cujusque operis sui antiquitas consuevit, quae quanto pauciora fuerint, tanto ocius ad rem, de qua agitur, aditus fiet, praesertim cui curae non erit exquisita, et accurata locutio, quae docentibus eloquentiam convenit. Expediam igitur illicò, ne dum studeo devitare prolixitatem, in illam ipsam incurrerim. Satis igitur mihi erit in loco, vice prohemii fore consultum, si quae Poeta rescribens Domino Cani, cui hanc canticam tertiam dedicavit, pro ipsa praefatione indiderim: quo melius Poetae intentio ab ejusdem observationibus intelligatur; quae sub hac forma fuere. . . ."

[58] See *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*, N. S., XVI, 23.

Later in this century we get the first accession to the list of letters hitherto recorded. This consists of the letter to the Princes and Peoples of Italy (*Epist.* v), in an Italian version, which was printed in a collection of letters of the eleventh, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, published at Rome in 1754 by Pietro Lazzari from MSS. in the library of the Jesuits' College at Rome.[59] Lazzari states that the MS. in which the letter occurs contained also the Italian version of Dante's letter to the Emperor, as well as Marsilio Ficino's translation of the *De Monarchia*, extracts from the *Vita Nuova*, and Bruni's lives of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. He remarks that the text of the letter to the Emperor differs to some extent from that printed by Biscioni,[60] from which he concludes, rightly as we now know, that both that letter and the one he now prints for the first time were originally written in Latin.

In 1788 Giovan Jacopo Dionisi of Verona printed in the fourth volume of his series of *Aneddoti*[61] sundry variants from a MS., at that time in the Cocchi collection, now in the Chapter library at Verona, of the letter to Can Grande; and two years later (1790) he printed for the first time, in the fifth volume of the same series, the Latin text of yet another letter of Dante, namely, the letter to a Florentine friend.[62] This letter was discovered at Florence in the now famous Laurentian MS.,[63] usually known as the *Zibaldone Boccaccesco*. The contents of this MS. had been described by Bandini in the volume of his catalogue of the MSS. in the Laurentian Library[64] published in 1775, but he does not appear to have had any inkling as to the authorship of the letter, which, together with two others in the same MS., he registered as anonymous. The Abate Mehus, however, who a few years before (in 1759) had printed in his *Vita Ambrosii Camaldulensis* the much-discussed letter of Frate Ilario from this same MS., recognized Dante as the author of the letter to a

[59] *Miscellaneorum ex MSS. libris Bibliothecae Collegii Romani Societatis Jesu tomus primus* (pp. 139–144).

[60] In *Prose di Dante Alighieri e di Messer Giovanni Boccacci*, published at Florence in 1723 (see above, p. 17).

[61] Vol. IV, p. 19.

[62] Vol. V, pp. 176–177.

[63] *Cod. Laurent.* XXIX, 8.

[64] Angelo Maria Bandini (1726–1800); his *Catalogus Codicum MSS. Græcorum, Latinorum, et Italorum Bibliothecæ Mediceæ-Laurentianæ* was published at Florence in eight folio volumes in 1764–1778; his description of MS. XXIX, 8 occurs in Vol. II, pp. 9–28 (see Troya, *Del Veltro Allegorico di Dante*, pp. 202–203).

Florentine friend, and communicated the fact to Dionisi, who printed it accordingly.[65] This original text in the *Aneddoti* having been very imperfect, Dionisi subsequently issued an emended text in his *Preparazione istorica e critica alla nuova edizione di Dante Allighieri*,[66] which was published at Verona in 1806. Twenty years later (in 1826) Carlo Troya made a fresh examination of the letters in the Laurentian MS., and satisfied himself that not only the letter to a Florentine friend, but also the other two letters, which immediately precede it in the MS., and which Bandini had catalogued as anonymous, were written by Dante. In the former of these two letters, which is headed *Cardinalibus Ytalicis D. de Florentia*, he recognized the letter mentioned by Villani as having been written by Dante to the Italian Cardinals after the death of Clement V. The second letter is headed *Exulanti Pistoriensi florentinus exul immeritus*, the addressee of which Troya identified with Dante's friend, Cino da Pistoja, an identification which has been generally accepted, as has that of the Florentine "exul immeritus" with Dante himself. Troya's famous *Veltro Allegorico di Dante* being at that time on the eve of publication, he was unable to include these two new letters in that work, but he announced his discovery in the book, and by way of specimen printed the first few paragraphs of the letter to the Cardinals in an Appendix.[67]

Besides the letters of Dante and of Frate Ilario this Laurentian MS. contains the poetical correspondence of Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio. It has recently been established by Henri Hauvette that these portions of the MS. are in the handwriting of Boccaccio,[68] who, as we have already stated, made use in his *Vita di Dante* of the letter to a Florentine friend, and also, it may here be added, of the letter of Frate Ilario in the same work.

In 1827, the year following Troya's announcement of his discovery in the Laurentian MS., appeared the first attempt at a collected edition of the letters of Dante. This was Karl Witte's *Dantis Alligherii Epistolae quae exstant*, which was printed privately, in sixty copies only,[69] at

[65] See Troya, *Del Veltro Allegorico di Dante*, pp. 203–204.

[66] Vol. I, pp. 71–73.

[67] *Del Veltro Allegorico di Dante*, pp. 204–205, 214–216.

[68] See above, p. 4, note 12.

[69] "In nur 60 verschenkten Exemplaren," wrote Witte of this volume in his article *Neu aufgefundene Briefe des Dante Allighieri*, published in 1838 in *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* (Nos. 149–151), and reprinted in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. I, pp. 473–487.

Padua in that year. The contents of this volume, the idea of which seems to have been suggested to Witte by the desire for such an edition expressed nearly a hundred years before by Fontanini in his *Eloquenza Italiana*,[70] were as follows, there being seven letters in all:

1. The Latin text of the letter to Cino da Pistoja (*Epist.* iv), now printed for the first time from a copy supplied by Sebastiano Ciampi from the Laurentian MS.

2. The Italian translation of the letter to the Princes and Peoples of Italy (*Epist.* v), first printed by Lazzari at Rome in 1754.

3. The Latin text of the letter to the Emperor Henry VII (*Epist.* vii), now printed for the first time from a MS. in the Biblioteca Marciana at Venice. Witte's attention having been drawn to the fact that extracts from this letter in Latin were printed in the catalogue of the Biblioteca Muranese, search was made at his instance through the good offices of the Marchése Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, with the result that the MS. containing the letter was discovered by the Abate Giovanni Antonio Moschini, the Prefetto of the Biblioteca Marciana, whither the spoils of the Murano library had been transferred. Besides the Latin text, Witte included an emended text of the Italian translation of the same letter, which had been first printed by Doni in 1547.

4. The Latin text of the letter to the Italian Cardinals (*Epist.* viii), now first printed in full from the Laurentian MS. The first few paragraphs of this letter were, as we have seen, printed by Troya in his *Veltro Allegorico* in 1826. The remainder was copied and printed by Witte himself in the same year in the *Antologia* of Florence;[71] and he now printed a revised and emended text of the whole letter.

5. The Latin téxt (revised) of the letter to a Florentine friend (*Epist.* ix), first printed by Dionisi at Verona in 1790.

6. The Latin text (with numerous emendations) of the letter to Can Grande (*Epist.* x) first printed in full by Baruffaldi at Venice in 1700.

7. The apocryphal letter, as Witte does not hesitate to pronounce it,[72] to Guido da Polenta, first printed by Doni in 1547.

[70] See Witte, *Dantis Alligherii Epistolæ quæ exstant*, p. 4 n.: "Una ut ederentur [Dantis Epistolæ], jam Fontaninus (Eloqu. ital. Ven. 1737, p. 154) desideravit."

[71] Vol. XXIII, p. 57.

[72] He heads it "Epistola Apocrypha."

In 1837, ten years after the appearance of Witte's volume, occurred what is undoubtedly the most important event yet recorded in the history of the letters of Dante; namely, the discovery in the Vatican Library, by a German student named Theodor Heyse, while collating MSS. of the *Divina Commedia* on behalf of Witte, of a fourteenth-century MS. containing no less than nine letters directly or indirectly attributed to Dante. The history of this MS., which, besides the letters of Dante, contains Petrarch's twelve eclogues and Dante's *De Monarchia*, so far as it has been possible to trace it, is briefly as follows.[73] It was executed in the fourteenth century, apparently for Francesco da Montepulciano, of the family of the Piendibeni of that place,[74] a Tuscan notary of some distinction, the friend and correspondent of Coluccio Salutati, the Florentine Chancellor, and successor of Filippo Villani in the Chancellorship of Perugia, who at the end of the eclogues has written his name and the date, Perugia, 20 July, 1394.[75] Francesco da Montepulciano left his books to the Capitular Library of the Cathedral of Montepulciano, the greater part of which was destroyed by fire in 1539;[76] but this MS. by some chance before that date had come into the possession of the Florentine scholar and biographer of Dante, Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459),[77] whence it eventually passed into the collection of the celebrated bibliophile, Ulrich Fugger (1526–1584),[78] son of Raimund Fugger, one of the famous merchant-princes of Augsburg. Ulrich Fugger, as is well known, became a Protestant, and to escape persecution took refuge in the Rhenish Palatinate and settled at Heidelberg, where he died in 1584, leaving his extensive collection of MSS. to the library of that city.

[73] For a slightly fuller account, see the present writer's article, *The Vatican Text* (*Cod. Vat.-Palat. Lat.* 1729) *of the Letters of Dante*, in *Modern Language Review*, VII, 1–3.

[74] To give him his full description, Francesco di Ser Jacopo di Ser Piendibene da Montepulciano (see F. Novati, *Epistolario di Coluccio Salutati*, iii, 312, n. 2; and O. Zenatti, *Dante e Firenze*, pp. 378 ff.).

[75] *Francisci de Montepolitiano. Expleui corrigere 20 Iulii Perusii 1394* (see Witte, *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. I, p. 474; and Zenatti, *Dante e Firenze*, p. 374). For an enumeration of the portions of the MS. in the handwriting of Francesco, see Zenatti, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

[76] See F. Novati, *Le Epistole di Dante*, in *Lectura Dantis: Le Opere Minori di D. A.*, p. 300.

[77] See Zenatti, *op. cit.*, pp. 370–375 note, 414–419.

[78] See Zenatti, *op. cit.*, pp. 372–374 note.

After the capture of Heidelberg by Tilly in 1622, the most valuable portion of the library, consisting of nearly two hundred cases of MSS., was presented by Maximilian I of Bavaria, in return for the papal support, to Pope Gregory XV, and was transferred to Rome and incorporated in the Vatican Library, under the superintendence of Leone Allacci.[79] Among the MSS. thus removed to the Vatican were many which had formed part of the Fugger collection, one of them being this MS.[80] containing the nine letters attributed to Dante discovered by Heyse.

Witte, having received copies of the letters from Heyse, wrote an account of them, with copious (translated) extracts, in an article entitled *Neu aufgefundene Briefe des Dante Allighieri*,[81] which appeared in *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* in May, 1838, and prepared to edit and publish them. But while he was engaged upon the work, his portfolio containing the transcript of the letters was stolen from him, and it was more than two years before he could succeed in getting fresh copies made.[82] In the meantime, attention having been directed to the MS. by the publication of Witte's article, one of the employés at the Vatican Library, Massi by name, took copies of the letters on his own account with the intention of forestalling Witte's projected edition. Massi, however, was unable to obtain the necessary *imprimatur*, and he

[79] Allacci, who was subsequently librarian of the Vatican (1661–1669), has left an interesting account of this transaction (see Curzio Mazzi, *Leone Allacci e la Palatina di Heidelberg*, Bologna, 1893). Some idea of the extent of the collection may be gathered from the fact that Allacci estimated that the covers alone, which to facilitate transport he caused to be stripped from the MSS., amounted to thirteen wagon-loads: "Lo sgravamento delle coperte," he writes, "è stato tanto necessario, poichè importava tanto e con l' occupar il luogho et il peso (poichè, se si fosse fatto altrimenti, saria stato impossibile la condotta), poichè importava tanto quanto li doi terzi delli libri che mecho conduco. E per mia curiosità ho posto da parte tutte quelle coperte, per veder quanto luogho occupavano e quanto pesavano, e trovai che non bastavano mancho tredici carri, e fu giudicato che pesassero passa duecento centinara" (*op. cit.*, p. 25).

[80] Now *Cod. Vaticano-Palatino Latino* 1729.

[81] In this article Witte omitted to mention the name of the student to whom the discovery was due, an omission which he did not repair until four years later, in 1842, in which year he acknowledged his indebtedness to Heyse in the Appendix to the second part of *Dante Alighieri's Lyrische Gedichte, übersetzt und erklärt von K. L. Kannegiesser und K. Witte* (p. 234).

[82] For this second transcript Witte was indebted once more to Heyse (see *Le Lettere di Dante scoperte dal Signor Teodoro Heyse*, in Vol. II, p. 701, of Niccolò Tommaseo's edition of the *Divina Commedia*, Milano, 1865).

then (in the autumn of 1841) offered his copies to Alessandro Torri of Pisa, who had been for some time engaged upon an edition of the minor works of Dante. Torri availed himself of the offer, and forthwith proceeded to Rome for the purpose of collating the copies with the original MS. in the Vatican. Having satisfied himself as to their accuracy, he included the nine letters in his volume, *Epistole di Dante Allighieri edite e inedite*, which was published at Leghorn at the end of the following year (1842).[83] It should be mentioned that before the publication of Torri's volume Witte had printed the text of one of the letters in the Vatican MS. in an appendix to the second volume of *Dante Alighieri's Lyrische Gedichte*,[84] published by Karl Ludwig Kannegiesser and himself at Leipzig earlier in the same year.

Of the letters contained in the Vatican MS. all except one, namely that to the Emperor Henry VII, were now made known for the first time, or for the first time in the original Latin text. The letters, in the order of their occurrence in the MS., are as follows:

1. To the Emperor Henry VII (*Epist.* vii), the Latin text of which had been printed by Witte in his collected edition in 1827 from the Venetian MS.

2. To the Florentines (*Epist.* vi) — "scelestissimis Florentinis intrinsecis," the title and contents of which prove it to be the abusive letter mentioned by Bruni and Manetti as having been written by Dante to the Florentines after the coming of Henry VII into Italy.[85]

3, 4, 5. Three short letters written in the name of a Countess of Battifolle to Margaret of Brabant, wife of the Emperor Henry.

6. To the Counts Oberto and Guido da Romena (*Epist.* ii).

7. To the Marquis Moroello Malaspina (*Epist.* iii), this being the letter mentioned above as having been printed by Witte in *Dante's Lyrische Gedichte*.[86]

8. To the Cardinal Niccolò da Prato (*Epist.* i).

9. To the Princes and Peoples of Italy (*Epist.* v), which had been printed in an Italian version by Lazzari in 1754.

Of these nine letters, five are definitely ascribed to Dante by name in the MS.; while it is evident from the places assigned to them in the

[83] See Witte's article, *Torris Ausgabe von Dantes Briefen*, in *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. I, pp. 489–490; and Torri, *op. cit.*, pp. vii–viii.

[84] Pp. 235–236. [85] See above, pp. 8–9. [86] See note 84.

midst of the others, that the remaining four, namely the three to the Empress and that to the Cardinal Niccolò, were regarded by the compiler of the collection as having been written by Dante.

With Torri's edition of the letters finality was reached so far as numbers are concerned. This total consisted of fourteen letters, which was made up of the three from the Laurentian MS., the nine from the Vatican MS., the letter to Can Grande, and the letter to Guido da Polenta; that is to say, his edition included the ten letters now usually accepted as Dante's (*Epistles* i to x in the *Oxford Dante*), together with the three Battifolle letters, which are as yet in dispute,[87] and the Polenta letter, now almost universally recognized as a falsification.

In 1857 Fraticelli published at Florence a revised edition of the letters, in which were embodied sundry emendations, the results of a fresh collation of the MSS. by Witte;[88] which, however, were by no means always improvements, for textual criticism, in spite of Witte's reputation as critic and editor, was not altogether his strongest point.

In 1882 Giuliani published, also at Florence, an edition of all the letters,[89] with characteristic emendations of his own; while from time to time in the course of the last sixty years or so, critical or diplomatic texts of individual letters have been printed by various editors, for example, by Torricelli (*Epist.* v),[90] Muzzi (*Epist.* iv, viii, ix),[91] Zenatti

[87] For the arguments in favor of their having been written by Dante, see Moore, *The 'Battifolle' Letters sometimes attributed to Dante*, in *Modern Language Review*, IX, 173–189 (reprinted in *Studies in Dante, Fourth Series*).

[88] Fraticelli writes in his *Proemio*: "Il dotto alemanno prof. Witte . . . non pago di quanto avea fatto la prima volta, volle di nuovo riscontrare i codici e confrontare le varie lezioni; e nuovamente portando il suo esame critico sopra ogni frase ed ogni parola del testo, potè rettificare molti passi disordinati, rendere intelligibili varie frasi oscure, e correggere parecchi e parecchi errori. E quantunque del suo accurato lavoro avess' egli determinato valersi per una ristampa, pure per un tratto d' impareggiabil cortesia ha voluto esserne con me liberale, affinchè io me ne giovassi per l' edizione presente. La lezione dunque del testo latino, che or per me si produce, è interamente al Witte dovuta" (*Opere Minori di Dante*, ed. 1893, Vol. III, p. 408). In 1855 Witte printed from a fifteenth-century MS. at Munich an improved text of the first four paragraphs of the letter to Can Grande (*Epist.* x) (see *Dante-Forschungen*, Vol. I, pp. 500–507), of which Fraticelli does not appear to have availed himself.

[89] In the second volume of his *Opere Latine di Dante* (pp. 1–73).

[90] In the *Antologia di Fossombrone* for October 22, 1842 (see my article on *The S. Pantaleo Text of Dante's Letters to the Emperor Henry VII, and to the Princes and Peoples of Italy*, in *Modern Language Review*, Vol. VII, p. 215, n. 1).

[91] In *Tre Epistole Latine di Dante Allighieri*, Prato, 1845.

(*Epist.* i, iii),[92] Torraca (*Epist.* iii),[93] Della Torre (*Epist.* ix),[94] Boffito (*Epist.* x),[95] Novati (*Epist.* iii),[96] Rostagno (*Epist.* viii),[97] and Parodi (*Epist.* iv).[98]

In 1895 Barbi drew attention in the *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*[99] to yet another MS., the fourth, containing letters of Dante. This was the fourteenth-century San Pantaleo MS. in the Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele at Rome,[100] which had been registered by Colomb de Batines in his *Bibliografia Dantesca*[101] fifty years before, but had strangely been overlooked by all the editors of the letters.

During the last few years diplomatic texts of the two letters contained in this San Pantaleo MS., of the one in the Venetian MS., and of the nine in the Vatican MS., as well as of two of those in the Laurentian MS., together with critical texts of four of the letters (viz. *Epist.* iv, v, vii, ix), have been printed in the *Modern Language Review*[102] by the present writer, with a view to the improvement of the text in the *Oxford Dante.*

[92] In *Dante e Firenze*, pp. 359–360, 431–432.

[93] In *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*, N. S., X, 143.

[94] In *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*, N. S., XII, 122–123.

[95] In *Memorie della Reale Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, Serie II, Tom. LVII.

[96] In *Dante e la Lunigiana*, pp. 518–520.

[97] In *Sul Testo della Lettera di Dante ai Cardinali Italiani*, in *La Bibliofilia* (November, 1912).

[98] In *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana*, N. S., XIX, 271–272.

[99] N. S., II, 23 n.

[100] *Cod. S. Pantaleo* 8.

[101] Vol. II, pp. 208–209.

[102] Paget Toynbee, *The Vatican Text* (*Cod. Vat.-Palat. Lat. 1729*) *of the Letters of Dante* (in *M. L. R.*, VII, 1–39); *The S. Pantaleo Text of Dante's Letters to the Emperor Henry VII, and to the Princes and Peoples of Italy* (in *M. L. R.*, VII, 208–224); *The Venetian Text* (*Cod. Marc. Lat. XIV, 115*) *of Dante's Letter to the Emperor Henry VII* (in *M. L. R.*, VII, 433–440); *The S. Pantaleo Italian Translation of Dante's Letter to the Emperor Henry VII* (in *M. L. R.*, IX, 332–343); *Dante's Letter to the Emperor Henry VII: Critical Text* (in *M. L. R.*, X, 64–72); *Dante's Letter to the Princes and Peoples of Italy: Critical Text* (in *M. L. R.*, X, 150–156); *The Laurentian Text* (*Cod. Laurent. XXIX, 8*) *of Dante's Letter to a Friend in Florence* (in *M. L. R.*, XI, 61–68); *The Laurentian Text* (*Cod. Laurent. XXIX, 8*) *of Dante's Letter to a Pistojan Exile* (in *M. L. R.*, XII, 37–44, 359–360). [Since the foregoing account was written the present writer has printed three more articles, namely, *Dante's Letter to the Florentines* (*Epist. vi*): *Emended Text* (in *M. L. R.*, XII, 182–191); *The Battifolle Letters attributed to Dante: Emended Text* (in *M. L. R.*, XII, 302–309); and *The Laurentian Text* (*Cod. Laurent. XXIX, 8*) *of Dante's Letter to the Italian Cardinals* (*Epist. viii*): *Emended Text* (in *M. L. R.*, XIII, 208–227).]